According to the information available, the SERCs of 20 States have issued open access regulations in distribution and 17 SERCs have also specified the method of open access surcharge.

The Electricity Act also provides for grant of license by the Appropriate Commission to two or more persons for distribution of electricity through their own distribution system within the same area, subject to compliance of additional requirements relating to the capital adequacy, creditworthiness, or code of conduct prescribed by the Central Government. The additional requirements in this regard have also been notified.

Subsidy to solar water heating system

*9. MS. PRAMILA BOHIDAR:
SHRI B.J. PANDA:

Will the Minister of NEW AND RENEWABLE ENERGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government purpose to provide subsidy to popularize solar water heaters to conserve energy;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action plan to Government to popularize the solar water heating system in the backward Orissa State, which has abundant potential in this sector?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF NEW AND RENEWABLE ENERGY (SHRI VILAS MUTTEMWAR): (a) and (b) A scheme for promotion of solar water heaters is being implemented through banks and financial institutions. The scheme provides for upfront interest subsidy so that loans are available at an effective interest rate of 2% to domestic users, 3% to institutions and 5% to commercial establishments. Capital subsidy equivalent to upfront interest subsidy is also available to registered institutions and commercial establishments that do not avail loans. 26 banks and financial institutions are presently participating in the implementation of the scheme.

(c) Various initiatives have been taken to popularize solar water heating systems in different States, including Orissa. In addition to financial assistance for installation of the systems, promotional measures are

being introduced which heating include mandatory installation of solar water systems through amendment of building bye-laws, rebate in property tax or electricity billls; setting up of Akshay Urja Shops in various districts for sale and service of renewable energy products including solar energy systems and devices. Other measures include technology upgradation to reduce cost, improve efficiency and reliability; support to training programmes, seminars/symposia; and publicity and awareness campaigns.

Opportunities for professional education in the country

*10. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA:
SHRIMAT ISHOBHANA BHARTIA:

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether his Ministry's survey on opportunities for professional education in the country reveals that some States are lagging behind in terms of seat availability per lakh population and in a communication to Chief Ministers suggested to shape up and open new institutes, increase intake, start new branches and courses and provide incentives for starting private institutions;

(b) if so, States that are lagging behind the national average in terms of educational opportunites; and

(c) the steps these States have taken to increase and bring them at least at par with the national average to remove the regional disparities?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI ARJUN SINGH): (a) to (c) As per information provided by the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), 18 States have enrolment capacity of less than national average of 68 per lakh population in degree level technical courses and 16 States have enrolment capacity of less than national average of 31 per lakh population in diploma level technical courses.

The States, which are lagging behind the national average in terms of diploma level seats in technical education as approved by AICTE are Bihar, Assam, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Manipur, Tripura, Himachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Delhi and Jammu & Kashmir. The States, which are